

## Intellectual property: Everything the digital-age librarian needs to know.

By: Lynda Kellam

[Kellam, L.](#) (2009, April-June). Intellectual property: Everything the digital-age librarian needs to know (book review). *Public Services Quarterly*, 5(2), 133-134.

Made available courtesy of Taylor and Francis: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t792306948>

### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: EVERYTHING THE DIGITAL-AGE LIBRARIAN NEEDS TO KNOW.

Wherry, Timothy Lee. Chicago: American Library Association, 2008, v+141 pp., \$50.00, ISBN 0-8389-0948-5.

Intellectual property and its myriad of concerns can be extremely confusing and difficult to navigate. In this excellent primer, Wherry provides a cogent and concise guide through the maze of copyrights, trademarks, and patents. Moreover, he has written the book for librarians, especially those assisting patrons with the facts and fictions of intellectual property.

Wherry is assuredly authorized to provide this overview. An author of four books on intellectual property, he has provided assistance with patent questions since 1983 when he began managing the Patent and Trademark Depository Library at Arizona State University. He now serves as the library director at Penn State Altoona College's Eiche Library. This new work updates information found in Wherry's 2002 book on intellectual property for librarians entitled *The Librarian's Guide to Intellectual Property in the Digital Age: Copyrights, Patents, and Trademarks*. In the 2002 work, the historical sections for each area of intellectual property are slightly longer and could supplement parallel sections in this 2008 update.

The first chapter delineates the differences between the three types of intellectual property: patents, copyrights, and trademarks. He also discusses the challenges facing each area in our digital age. By including profiles of well-known cases, such as the copyright questions surrounding Google's thumbnail images, Wherry makes each of these areas and their intersections with technology much more engaging. Most readers will have some familiarity with the cases and after reading will have a better understanding of how they fit within the larger discussion of intellectual property.

In addition to individual chapters on patents, copyrights, and trademarks, Wherry gives the reader detailed tutorials on searching patents and trademarks. The tutorials are well-written and easy to follow. The only minor criticism involves the reproduction of the screenshots for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office website. While they provide the necessary visual cues for following the tutorial, the quality is regrettable. Moreover, an online version of the tutorial as a companion to the printed volume would be a helpful supplement to the screenshot approach. In addition to assisting digitally-oriented learners, creating an online tutorial would allow Wherry to extend this edition's applicability if the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office website changes.

Furthermore, Wherry provides question and answer sections following his chapters on each area of intellectual property. Some are basic factual answers to specific questions ("What is the registration fee?", for example). Others serve as case studies in the application of intellectual property law. In the chapter on copyright, the most helpful questions and answers center on "fair use" and its application to specific educational scenarios. Because "fair use" is such a misunderstood and abused concept in many educational institutions, any academic or even public librarian would benefit from reading these scenarios.

As a playful addition, Wherry provides an appendix of the intellectual property codes in verse. Appendix A is a complete verse rendition of the US Codes on Copyright, Trademarks and Patents. Created by Yehuda Berlinger, they serve as a crib sheet for finding relevant sections of the U.S. Codes. Also helpful is his directory of Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries in the United States.

Certainly other works on intellectual property go into greater depth, especially on the legal aspects. Nevertheless, I recommend this reference work to any library and librarian for its well-written, readable explanations and its relevancy to librarianship in the digital age. This work would also be an excellent recommended reading for a Library and Information Science course on intellectual property. While the volume may at first glance seem somewhat esoteric, the proliferation of questions about these issues, especially questions about copyright and fair use, make Wherry's book required reading for all public services librarians.

Lynda M. Kellam  
Data Services & Government Information Librarian  
Jackson Library, UNCG  
PO Box 26170  
Greensboro NC 27402-6170